



TOURISM IN SOUTH ANDAMAN: OPPORTUNITIES, IMPACTS AND FUTURE POTENTIAL IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Travel and tourism industry is rapidly growing worldwide and in India, presenting a valuable opportunity to showcase the rich history, culture, and diversity of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This research paper aims to highlight the renowned tourist attractions in the Andaman district, analyze the positive and negative impacts of tourism, and provide recommendations for the sustainable development of tourism in the region. The study focuses on the South Andaman district, often referred to as “Mini India,” as the chosen area of research. Through secondary data sources, it is observed that the natural beauty, geographic features, and cultural diversity of the South Andaman district offer significant benefits and opportunities for the local population. The findings suggest that tourism in the Andaman Islands has a promising future, with the potential to evolve into a national tourist destination. By leveraging its natural resources, cultural heritage, and artistic diversity, the region can attract more visitors and boost economic growth. It is crucial to implement sustainable practices and community involvement to ensure the long-term success and positive impacts of tourism in the Andaman Islands.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, Travels, Andaman, Nicobar, Islands, Mini India

INTRODUCTION

The travel and tourism sector in India has significantly contributed to the country’s economic growth and employment opportunities. With slogans like “Incredible India” and “Atithidevo Bhava,” India has positioned itself as one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia, attracting millions of international visitors each year. In 2019 alone, India welcomed 10.93 million international tourists, contributing 4.7 percent to the country’s GDP. [1], [2]The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, located in the Bay of Bengal to the east of the Indian mainland, boast a diverse landscape of dense rain-fed forests, exotic flora and fauna, and picturesque islets. Comprising around 836 islands, with approximately 550 in the Andaman Group and 28 inhabited, the islands also include the Nicobar group with 22 main islands, 10 of which are inhabited. Historically significant landmarks like Cellular Jail, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, Viper Island, and Mount Harriet add to the cultural richness of the region. Recognized as an endemic bird area, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are home to a vast array of bird species, with 270 reported, including 106 endemic species. The islands also feature 96 wildlife sanctuaries, nine national parks, and one biosphere reserve, showcasing the region’s biodiversity. The islands experience both the south-west and north-east monsoons, further enhancing their natural beauty. The rich cultural heritage and historical diversity of the Andaman Islands, along with its stunning beaches and clear blue waters, attract tourists seeking unique experiences. Tourism plays a vital role in promoting socio-economic development by driving economic growth, creating employment opportunities, and supporting sustainable development, particularly in rural and remote areas. The Andaman Islands hold a special place on the

India tourism map, offering a blend of scenic beauty, cultural richness, and historical significance that continue to captivate visitors from around the world.[3], [4]

Sl. No.	Month/Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
1	January 2023	37943	1172	39115
2	February 2023	28827	1076	29903
3	March 2023	28992	978	29970
4	April 2023	26674	554	27228
5	May 2023	23601	862	24463
6	June 2023	18826	286	19112
7	July 2023	10760	311	11071
8	August 2023	14499	430	14929
9	September 2023	22240	382	22622
10	October 2023	33718	699	34417
11	November 2023	34074	1057	35131
12	December 2023	43465	1218	44683
Total	323619	9025	332644	

Source: Andaman & Nicobar Tourism (andamans.gov.in)[5]

Table 1: Foreign and Domestic Tourist Visited in Andaman Islands

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides insights from various researchers and academicians that address the importance of travel and tourism, particularly in the context of Indian culture and tradition. The sources of literature review for this study include published research papers, articles in national and international

journals, books, government reports, and research agency reports. According to Mahalakshmi Venkateah and Joseph Michej Raj [6], tourism has deep roots in Indian culture and tradition, playing a significant role in the economic development of the country. Their study emphasizes how the tourism sector contributes to economic growth by providing employment opportunities and fostering development, particularly in low-income countries. Naveen Kumar and Binoy[7]also highlight the integral role of tourism in Indian culture and tradition, citing its contributions to generating foreign exchange, infrastructure development, increased revenue, and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). Their study underscores tourism as a key factor in the overall development of the nation. Rajender, Durafshan, and Azatullah emphasize that the tourism and travel industry is the largest and most diverse sector in India, playing a crucial role in increasing employment opportunities, boosting foreign exchange earnings, and stimulating growth in domestic industries. They consider the tourism sector as dynamic with a promising future for further development and expansion.[8]

Overall, the literature review underscores the significant impact of tourism on economic development, employment generation, infrastructure growth, and overall national progress. It highlights the vital role that the tourism sector plays in contributing to the prosperity and advancement of India as a whole.

Statement of the Problem:

The statement of the problem in the context of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands highlights the challenges faced by tourists in the region despite its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. While the UTs are known for their mesmerizing scenery, pristine beaches, diverse wildlife, and lush forests, there are significant infrastructure-related issues that hinder the tourism experience in the South Andaman district. Tourists visiting the region encounter problems such as inadequate roads, limited air and water transportation facilities, insufficient government accommodations, telecommunications and mobile network issues, safety concerns, and challenges related to medical services and access to essential medicines. These infrastructure shortcomings impact the overall tourism experience and pose obstacles for travelers exploring the hidden natural beauty spots in South Andaman.

Recognizing the importance of addressing these challenges for enhancing the tourism potential of the region, the researcher aims to investigate and shed light on these issues. The anticipated findings from this study are expected to be beneficial for a wide range of stakeholders, including administrators, policymakers, economists, sociologists, researchers, academicians, journalists, and NGO workers. Additionally, the outcomes of this research can provide valuable insights for the Ministry of Tourism and the Central Government of India in shaping policies and strategies to improve infrastructure, safety, and overall tourism development in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Objectives:

1. Highlight the famous tourist places in the South Andaman district of Andaman Islands.
2. Examine the positive and negative impacts of tourism in

the study area.

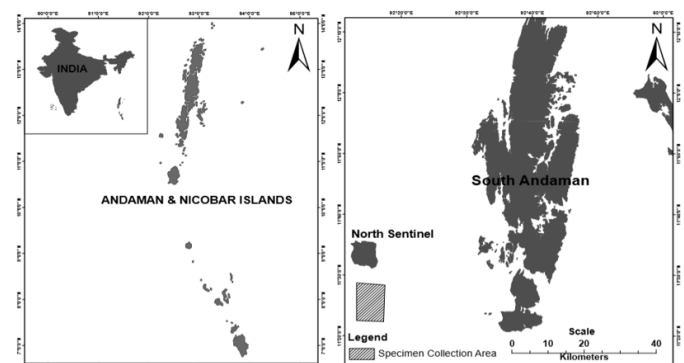
3. Provide suggestions for the better development of tourism in the South Andaman district of Andaman Islands.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for the current research work is analytical, descriptive, and empirical in nature. This study relies entirely on secondary sources of data gathered from newspapers, research journals, books, and various websites. The research aims to analyze, describe, and present empirical evidence based on existing information and literature related to the subject matter.

Study Area

The study area of the South Andamans district is one of the three districts in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, situated in the Bay of Bengal region between longitude E 92° to E 94° and latitude N 6° to N 14°. The total area of the South Andamans district covers 2980 square kilometers. This district is home to four primitive tribes - Onges, Jarawas, Great Andamanese, and Sentinalese - who are recognized as belonging to the Negrito stock. Additionally, the Nicobarese tribe has been settled at Harminder Bay in this district.[6] The South Andamans district comprises three tehsils: Port Blair, Ferrargunj, and Little Andaman. With its diverse population, geographical location, and unique tribes, the South Andamans district offers a rich cultural tapestry and fascinating natural surroundings for study and exploration.[2], [9]



Source: www.semanticscholar.org Study Area[10]

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The South Andaman district of the Andaman Islands offers a plethora of tourism opportunities catering to diverse interests such as adventure, eco-tourism, heritage, historical visits, spiritual exploration, art and culture appreciation, rural experiences, and tribal encounters. The district is home to several prominent tourist destinations that showcase the region's rich history and natural beauty.

1. **National Memorial Cellular Jail:** Once a formidable colonial prison during British rule, the Cellular Jail now serves as a National Memorial. It symbolizes the struggles of Indian freedom fighters and offers insights into India's fight for independence.
2. **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island (NSCB):** This

small island served as the British capital until the Japanese occupation during World War II. It holds significant historical remnants and is accessible via private ferries.

3. **Viper Island:** Known for its historical significance, Viper Island housed a colonial-era jail where political prisoners were held. The island's tranquil surroundings offer a glimpse into its dark past.
4. **Flag Point:** A historical spot where Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose hoisted the Indian flag for the first time on Indian soil. The flag point stands as a proud symbol of India's freedom struggle.
5. **Chatham Saw Mill:** As one of Asia's oldest sawmills, Chatham Saw Mill on a tiny island near Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) showcases the diverse timber wealth of the region, offering insights into forest activities.
6. **Anthropological Museum:** Featuring the diverse tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the museum provides an ethnographic view of the region's indigenous communities.
7. **Swaraj Dweep and Shaheed Dweep:** These picturesque islands offer pristine beaches, lush green forests, and vibrant coral reefs for a tranquil getaway amidst nature's beauty.
8. **Mundapahar Beach and Mundapahar Trek Route:** Ideal for eco-friendly picnics and trekking adventures, Mundapahar Beach and Trek Route offer panoramic views of the islands' natural splendor.
9. **Scuba Diving:** The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a diving paradise, where visitors can explore stunning reefs, underwater landscapes, and diverse marine life through scuba diving experiences.
10. **Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park:** A haven for marine enthusiasts, this park offers rare coral sightings, glass-bottom boat rides, and snorkeling opportunities to admire underwater marine life.
11. **Mount Manipur:** Formerly known as Mount Harriet, this vantage point provides breathtaking views of nearby islands and the sea, making it an ideal spot for scenic overviews.
12. **Barren Island:** Home to India's only active volcano, Barren Island offers a unique opportunity to witness volcanic landscapes and marine biodiversity under special permissions.
13. **Cinque Island:** Known for its rare corals, scenic beaches, and tropical rainforests, Cinque Island is a sanctuary for nature lovers and underwater exploration enthusiasts.

These diverse attractions and experiences in the South Andaman district make it a captivating destination for travelers seeking

historical insights, cultural discoveries, and environmental adventures in the Andaman Islands.

Major Challenges faced by Tourist in South Andaman district of ANIs:

Some of the major challenges faced by tourists in the South Andaman district of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are:

1. **Inhospitable Climate and Weather Conditions:** The region experiences challenging weather conditions during the rainy and summer seasons, impacting outdoor activities and travel plans for tourists.
2. **Limited Government Accommodation:** There is a lack of available government accommodation facilities, which may limit options for tourists seeking affordable and reliable lodging.
3. **Limited Food Options:** Non-availability of healthy and diverse food choices at destination places can be a challenge for tourists, especially those with dietary restrictions.
4. **Shortage of Tourist Guides:** Inadequate availability of trained tourist guides at various tourist sites can hinder tourists' overall experience and understanding of the local attractions.
5. **Lack of Shopping Amenities:** The absence of large shopping malls or retail facilities near tourist attractions can limit shopping opportunities for visitors looking to purchase souvenirs or local goods.
6. **Parking Facilities:** Insufficient parking spaces, particularly during peak tourist seasons, can create challenges for visitors traveling by private vehicles or rental cars.
7. **Limited Healthcare Services:** The lack of easily accessible and well-equipped hospitals or medical facilities in case of emergencies or health-related issues can be a concern for tourists seeking medical support.
8. **Connectivity Issues:** Inadequate sea and air connectivity to and from the region can impact tourists' travel plans and access to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, potentially leading to logistical challenges and disruptions.

Addressing these challenges through improved infrastructure, increased services, enhanced safety measures, and better connectivity can help enhance the overall tourism experience in the South Andaman district, making it more welcoming and accessible for visitors.

Positive Impacts:

The positive impacts of tourism in the South Andaman district of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are significant and beneficial for the local communities and the region as a whole:

1. **Generating Employment and Livelihood Opportunities:** Tourism creates job opportunities for local residents,

especially in areas near tourist attractions, thereby improving livelihoods and boosting the economy.

2. **Source of Income for Locals:** Tourism serves as a source of income for individuals and businesses in the community, stimulating economic growth and supporting local businesses.
3. **Preservation and Conservation:** Tourism can contribute to the preservation of national heritage sites and the conservation of the natural environment, promoting sustainability and protecting cultural resources.
4. **Development of Infrastructure:** The growth of tourism often leads to the development of basic infrastructure such as roads, hotels, airports, and restaurants, which benefits both tourists and local residents.
5. **Promoting Peace and Stability:** Tourism can foster peace and stability in the region by encouraging cultural exchange, understanding, and cooperation among visitors and locals from diverse backgrounds.
6. **Regional Development and Planning:** The influx of tourists can drive regional development and planning initiatives, leading to improved amenities, public services, and overall quality of life for residents.
7. **Focus on Eco-Tourism:** With an emphasis on eco-tourism practices, tourism in the South Andaman district can promote sustainable travel experiences that minimize environmental impact and prioritize conservation efforts.
8. **Promoting Local Handicrafts:** Tourism provides a platform for promoting and selling local handicraft products, supporting traditional artisans and preserving cultural heritage through art and craftsmanship.

Overall, the positive impacts of tourism in the South Andaman district contribute to economic prosperity, cultural preservation, environmental conservation, and sustainable development, enriching the region and benefiting both visitors and local communities.

Negative Impacts:

The negative impacts of tourism in the South Andaman district of Andaman and Nicobar Islands include:

1. **Undesirable Social and Cultural Change:** Tourism can lead to undesirable social and cultural changes in local communities, affecting traditional practices, values, and ways of life.
2. **Creating a Sense of Antipathy:** Increased tourism may create feelings of resentment or antipathy among locals towards tourists due to overcrowding, cultural clashes, or other issues.
3. **Adverse Effects on Environment and Ecology:** The influx

of tourists can have adverse effects on the environment and local ecosystems, leading to pollution, habitat destruction, and depletion of natural resources.

4. **Seasonal Character of Jobs:** Many jobs created by the tourism industry in the South Andaman district may be seasonal in nature, leading to employment instability for local residents.
5. **Increase in Prices:** The rise in tourism-related activities and demand can lead to price increases, making goods and services less affordable for local residents.
6. **Non-Islanders Taking Over Tourism-Generating Jobs:** There is a risk of non-locals taking over tourism-related jobs, which can reduce opportunities for local residents and communities to benefit from the industry.

Addressing these negative impacts requires careful planning, sustainable development practices, community involvement, and effective policies to mitigate the adverse effects of tourism on the social, cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of the South Andaman district.

Suggestions:

The following are some suggestions and policy implications for the development of tourism in the South Andaman district of Andaman and Nicobar Islands:

1. **Focus on Adventure-Friendly Infrastructure:** The Ministry of Tourism, Central Government, and local administration should prioritize the development of adventure-friendly infrastructure such as better road services, improved transportation options, and facilities to promote adventure tourism in the islands.
2. **Emphasize Rural Tourism:** There should be a greater emphasis on rural tourism initiatives that showcase the rural way of life, traditional arts, heritage, and cultural diversity of the region to attract more tourists.
3. **Ensure Safety and Security:** Adequate numbers of tourist guides, interpreters, police personnel, and security measures should be in place at every tourist destination in the study area to ensure the safety and well-being of visitors.
4. **Maintain Cleanliness and Sanitary Facilities:** It is essential to maintain good condition and cleanliness of sanitary facilities at all tourist places to enhance the overall visitor experience and promote hygiene standards.
5. **Improve Amenities and Accommodation:** The provision of good amenities, availability of quality accommodations, clean restroom facilities, and the establishment of shopping complexes on every island in the South Andaman district are essential for enhancing the comfort and convenience of tourists.

6. **Enhance Air and Water Connectivity:** Local administration should focus on improving air and water connectivity for inter-island travel to facilitate seamless transport options for tourists exploring different islands in the region.
7. **Prioritize Employment for Islanders:** It is recommended to prioritize job opportunities for local residents of the islands, ensuring that they benefit from the tourism industry first and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.

Implementing these suggestions and policies can help boost tourism, promote sustainable development, and enhance the overall tourist experience in the South Andaman district of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

CONCLUSION:

Tourism has played a vital role in showcasing the rich history, art, and culture of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, specifically in the South Andaman district. The tourism sector holds immense potential for driving economic growth and development in the region. Not only does tourism serve as a catalyst for economic advancement, but it also serves as a significant source of employment generation, boosting local livelihoods. Travel and tourism have placed the South Andaman district on the global tourism map, garnering recognition, appreciation, and instigating positive cultural changes. The natural beauty, diverse geography, and rich cultural heritage of the region present abundant opportunities for local residents. Additionally, tourism plays a key role in promoting national integration, fostering small and local industries, and contributing significantly to the revenue of the islands.

It is evident that the tourism sector is a powerful driver of economic progress in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, catalyzing growth and positively impacting various aspects of the local economy and society. With tourism being one of the fastest-growing sectors in the region, it has transformed the landscape and contributed to the overall development and prosperity of the islands. The continued focus on sustainable tourism practices and strategic development initiatives can further enhance the tourism potential of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, ensuring long-term benefits for the region and its inhabitants.

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